

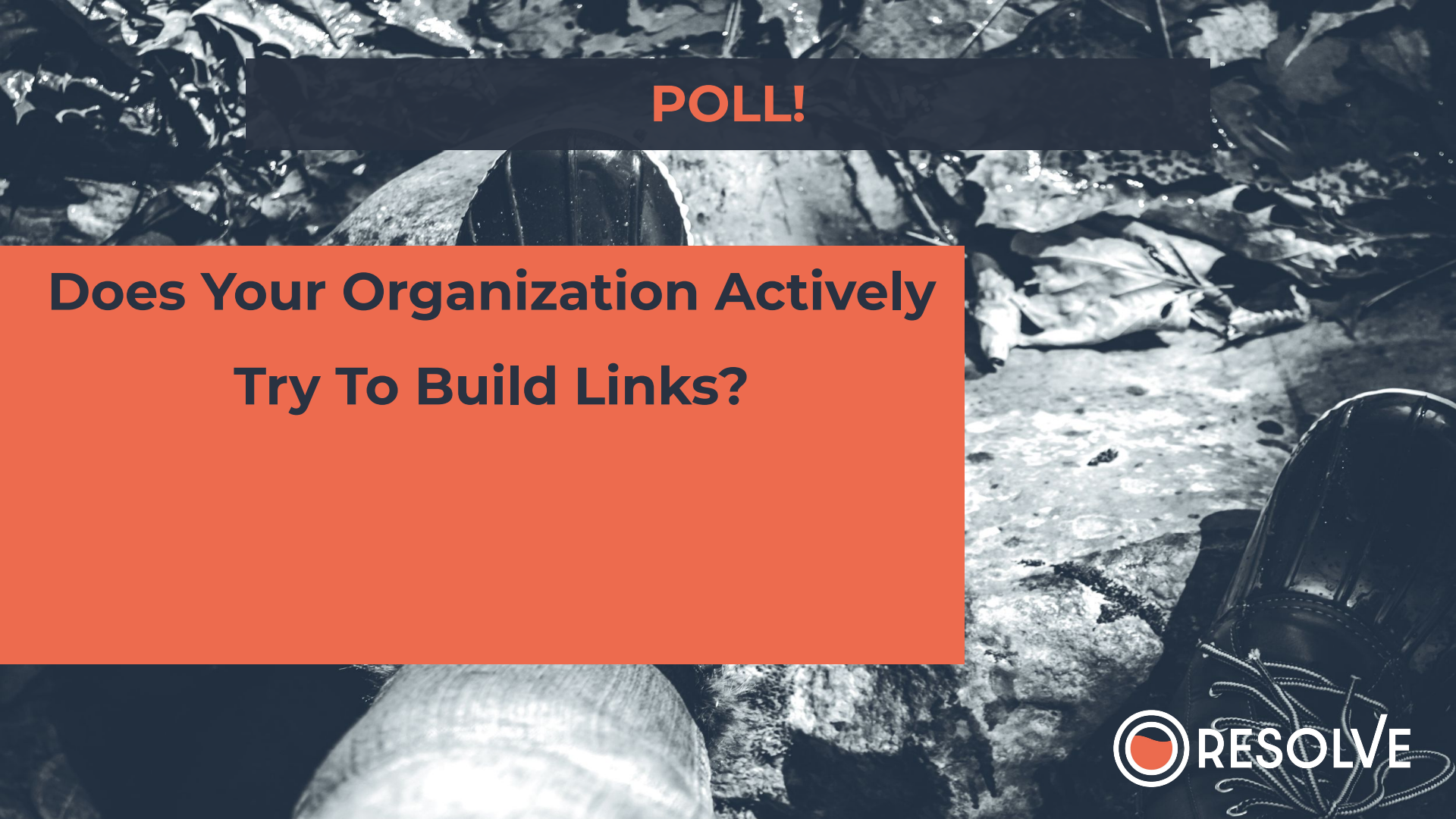
Link Building In 2024

What Works, What Doesn't, And What's Next?



Michael Johnson

Founder & CEO,
Resolve



POLL!

**Does Your Organization Actively
Try To Build Links?**



What We'll Cover Today!

- The History of Link Building: Why do we think about links the way that we do?
- Tactics That Should Be History
- Tactics that Still Work and HOW TO EXECUTE THEM.
- Where we are headed! Trends to look out for!





What Matters To Google (according to Google)

“I can tell you what they are (Google’s top ranking factors). **It is content.
And it’s links pointing to your site.**”

- Andre Lipatsev | Google

The History

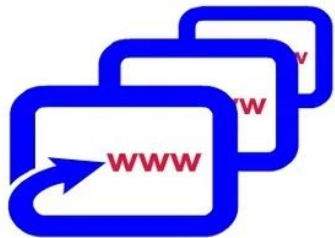
- **Google Started in 1996**
- Shortly Thereafter Links Were a Core & Distinguishing Part of the Algorithm (Page Rank)
- SEOs figured it out and did what SEOs do...

ABUSED THE HECK OUT OF IT.



The History

- PR (PageRank) was ultimately how link quality was measured.
 - This why today, we are OBSESSED with DA, PA, DR, UR, Etc.



14 PR7+ Social Bookmark Backlinks!!!!

MANUALLY SUBMITTED!!

Google™
PageRank



The History

- In Nov. 2012 Google released the Penguin update to battle link spam.
- It was the first of many link focused algorithm updates that we've seen over the past decade.

Google Penguin



SpamBrain Update

- 10 years after Penguin, Google launched the SpamBrain update.
- Google uses machine learning to detect what links are likely spam/bought and what links are earned.

Google Link Spam Update



Do Links Still Matter?

- Correlation studies say... Yeah, probably!
- SEMRush in January 2024:

8 out of top 20 factors were link related...



What Can We Learn?

- If you are still looking at links from the same lens as 10 years ago. You're not thinking about it right
- Google cares about links & they affect rankings. Why invest time/resources into something that doesn't matter?
- Google is trying to cut out the noise, so they can get to the links that really matter.



What Doesn't Work?

- **Understanding Spam Brain**
- **What is machine learning?**
- **What are patterns of paid links vs. patterns of earned links?**

What is Machine Learning?

- **“A Branch of AI that focuses on using data and algorithms to enable AI to imitate the way that humans learn”**
 - IBM
- **AI is learning from data, from studying patterns, identifying outliers, etc.**

SGE

Officially Launched Last Week!

The screenshot shows a Google search interface with the query "what is link building". The "AI Overview" section is expanded, providing a concise definition: "Link building is a search engine optimization (SEO) technique that involves getting other websites to link to your website. The goal is to improve the visibility of your pages in the eyes of search engines, such as Google and Bing, and to help your website rank higher in search results." Below this, three featured snippets are visible: Semrush (dated Apr 25, 2024), Ahrefs (dated Oct 9, 2023), and BigCommerce. A "Show more" button is located at the bottom of the AI Overview section.



Semrush

<https://www.semrush.com> · Blog ·

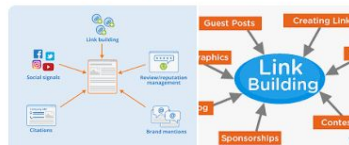
Link Building for SEO: A Guide to the Basics

Apr 25, 2024 — Link building is an SEO tactic that involves getting other websites to link to your website. So search engines like Google may view it as more ...

What Is Link Building in SEO? · Best Backlink Building Tactics

People also ask :

Link building :



SGE

YOU'RE DOING GREAT!!

food names end with um

All Images Forums Shopping Videos News

AI overviews are experimental. [Learn more](#)

Here are some fruit names that end with "um":
Applum, Bananum, Strawberrum, Tomatum,
and Coconut.

how to pass kidney stones qui

AI Answer

[Learn more](#)

Drinking plenty of fluids, such as water, ginger ale, lemon-lime soda, or fruit juice, can help pass kidney stones more quickly. You should aim to drink at least 2 quarts (2 liters) of urine every 24 hours, and your

 **RESOLVE**

SGE

- **Why Will Links Matter in an SGE World?**
- **Google is using SpamBrain to be more nuanced in how they view links. How do we not just award sites based on shallow metrics?**
- **Relevant links from trustworthy sources can serve as a human factor to judging authority.**

Patterns of Quality Links

- Anchor text is user friendly
- Linking to a page that is contextually relevant
- Linking to valuable information
- Non-Promotional
- “Helpful Content” → “Helpful Links”

Patterns of Spam Links

- Anchor text is SEO Focused (exact match?)
- Relevance may not matter, mainly focused on DA/DR, General Sites.
- Linking to promotional pages
- Disregard for users, just in it for the JUICE.



What Doesn't Work?

- Guest posts on general news sites, linking to product/promotional pages, using exact match anchor text.

IF YOUR LINKS LOOK LIKE THIS →

**You/Your Agency are doing it
WRONG.**

Wrongful Deaths in California – What Are the Causes?

By Brittney Boatright - August 18, 2023



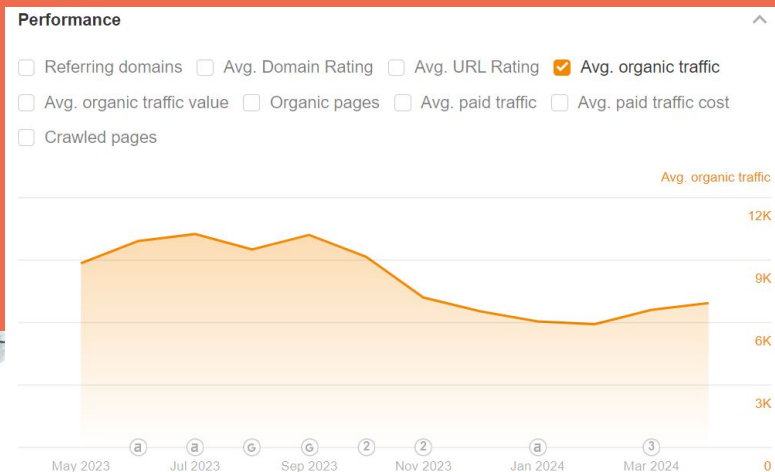
Source: bryanmusgrave.com

Anything can happen at any point of time in our life. Even the most cautious drivers meet with an accident sometimes. When any of your family members die due to the intentional acts or recklessness of others, you will have all the right to initiate a lawsuit on them. In California, wrongful deaths can occur due to medical malpractice, negligent driving, crimes and intentional acts.

For wrongful death cases, you must approach an experienced attorney in California always. Type 'attorney near me' in the search option online and you will see the list of attorneys available in your location, who handles the wrong death cases. Before you choose any attorney, it is very important to read their client reviews. Knowing their success rate is also important.

What Doesn't Work?

- This is the traffic from our client who was doing this link building before they started with us in January.
- HUGE HIT RIGHT AROUND WHEN SPAMBRRAIN DROPPED.

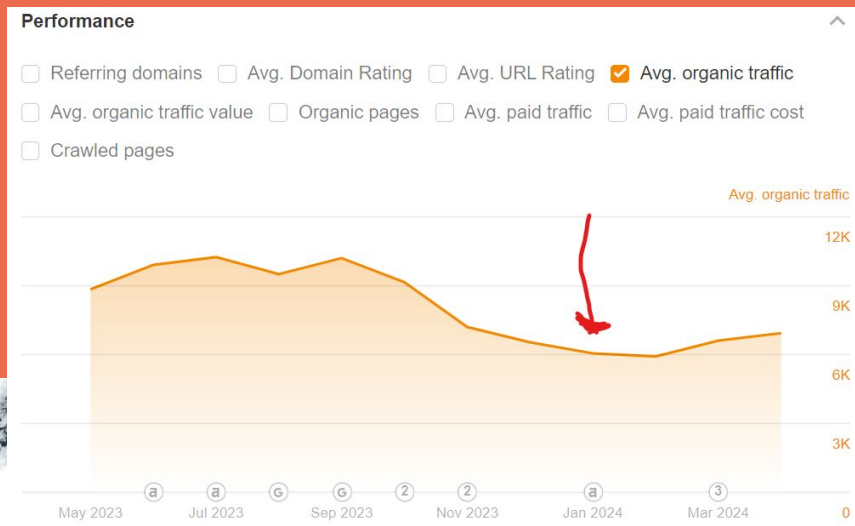


What Does Spambrain Do?

- Spambrain tells Google to ignore/devalue links that follow those patterns.
- The client wasn't PENALIZED in the traditional sense.
- This was a correction. To neutralize the effect of the spam links.

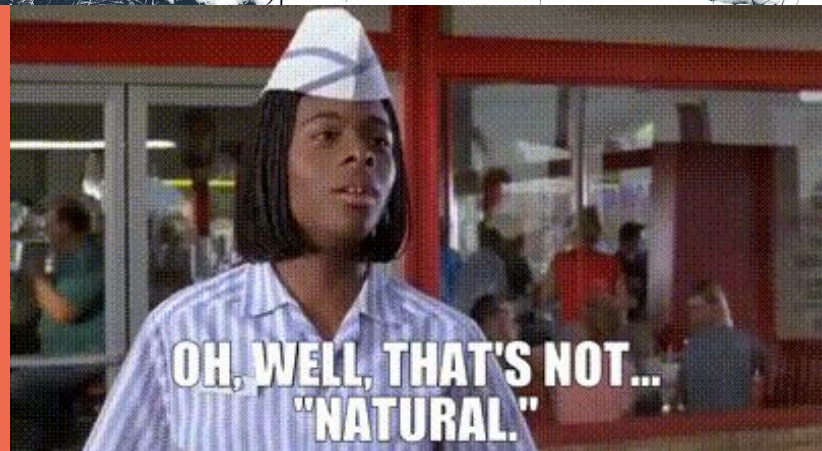
What Doesn't Work?

- Once we started building better quality links... the client started recovering but it's going to take time to build this up naturally.



What Does Work?

- **BUILD HELPFUL LINKS.**
- **BUILD RELEVANT LINKS.**
- **USE DA/DR as a secondary/tertiary metric.**
- **USE DIVERSE TACTICS.**
 - A backlink profile full of guest posts doesn't look natural.



How To Evaluate Target Sites

WHAT MAKES A QUALITY TARGET SITE?

DA does not = Authority
Relevance = Authority



MEASURING THE QUALITY OF LINKS

"THE FORCE IS STRONG WITH THIS ONE."

DARTH.

1. RELEVANCE
2. HUMAN VALUE
3. TRUST

RELEVANCY + HUMAN VALUE

- Relevancy shows authority
- Relevancy facilitates effective content, site-finding, and outreach
- Links are a human ranking factor
- Think about the person and their audience

2. IDENTIFYING TARGETS

- Designate criteria that are important to you and the goals of your link building efforts. Once designated, ensure your criteria are reasonable within the scope of your campaign.
- At the end of the day, we use a mixture of: relevance, human value (traffic, engagement etc), and authority to measure the quality of a target site.
- **DON'T GET TOO HUNG UP ON DOMAIN AUTHORITY** — DA is a third-party metric, it is not how Google actually views a site!
- Trust your gut, if something seems fishy about the site then dig deeper. Analyze the linking neighborhood: are they linking to low-quality sites and are low-quality sites linking to them?
- In a world without Google, would I still want this link?

1. ORGANIC
2. TO MID/BOTTOM FUNNEL

Links won't be available at scale and not likely from quality sites.

1. QUALITY
2. TO MID/BOTTOM FUNNEL

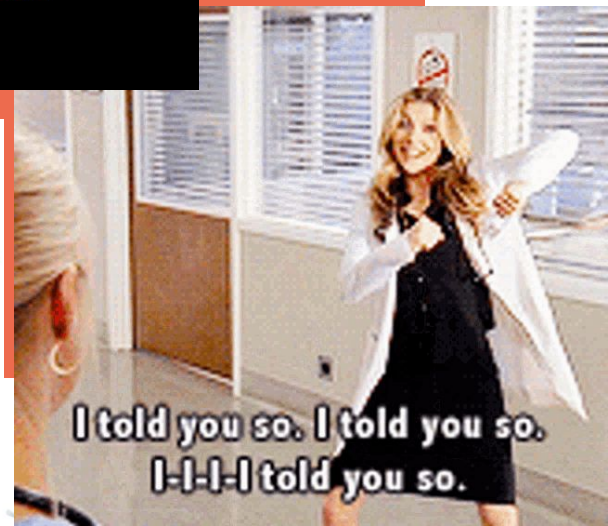
Links will likely be paid and considered "non-organic."

1. AT SCALE
2. TO MID/BOTTOM FUNNEL

Links will likely be paid or low quality directory style links.

1. AT SCALE
2. ORGANIC
3. QUALITY

Direct links to transactional pages must be sacrificed.



How To Evaluate Target Sites

- **RELEVANCE!!! - Use your human brain!**
- **Human Value - Does this site mean anything to anybody who is NOT building links on it?**
- **Trust - Authority, Backlink Neighborhood, etc.**

THINK OF LINKS AS ENDORSEMENTS. Who do I want endorsements from?

Let's Build Your Link Building Toolbelt

- These are the tactics that I recommend using, that are replicable, and sustainable.
- Not all of these work for everybody but you should be able to find 1-2 of these that you can execute for your brand.

Digital PR

- Create a piece of newsworthy information that will pique journalists' interest.
 - Public Data
 - Proprietary Research
 - Fun/Zany
- Identify the relevant beats
- Identify Trends, Topics, etc within those beats (demand)
- Create content that satisfies that demand



Digital PR Example

- <https://visitsequest.com/blog/10-most-googled-monsters-in-the-u-s/>

Links:

- <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/weird/hys-mythical-lake-creature-nis-jersey-devil-among-most-searched-for-monsters-in-us/4275648/>
- <https://news.yahoo.com/tacoma-deemed-hot-spot-bigfoot-191141740.html>
- <https://myq105.com/2023/04/14/floridas-most-googled-monster-have-you-seen-it/>
- <https://k2radio.com/ixp/102/p/its-finally-proven-that-wyomings-jackalope-is-realish/>

(Good) Guest Posting

- **HELPFUL CONTENT/HELPFUL GUEST POSTS**
- Is this information valuable to the audience that I'm writing for?
- Is the link I'm placing in the article providing further insight/value to the article?
- Will the user expect to come to the page they landing on?
- RELEVANCE, RELEVANCE, RELEVANCE.
 - Domain to Domain, Page to Domain, Page to Page.
- If you are paying someone to throw up low value/quality or advertorial content for your brand, this isn't going to work.



Resource Link Building

- Purely Editorial
- Associated with Legit Organizations
- Sometimes from .edu, .gov, .orgs
- Pre-existing pages
- Will generally require a resource worthy of links on your site.



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Example

Connect. Empower. Grow.

More than just software, Dentrix connects your practice technology into one management system, one workflow – so teams work smarter.

REQUEST A DEMO



WATCH OVERVIEW VIDEO

Let's Say You are Dentrix.com, a dental software company.

We want to find a way to connect dental software with an audience that has a lot of resource pages dedicated to them...

Let's Do Some Research!

Example

Start by thinking about what kind of pages link out....

RESOURCE & LINKS PAGES.

- What kinds of audiences can you find?
- What kinds of resources are they linking to
- What topics are (or aren't) being mentioned?

Example

- While I was searching I found a ton of resource pages on dentists websites, I also found a focus on children, and then eventually found this guide from Byte.com
- - This Guide has earned over 80 links for Byte! Including .edu and .gov links.



The screenshot shows the top portion of a webpage. At the top right is the 'byte' logo in red and the text 'Community Initiatives'. Below this is the title 'A Guide to Dental Care for Children with Autism' in bold black font. A breadcrumb trail reads 'Resources > Community Initiatives > A Guide to Dental Care for Children with Autism'. On the left, there is a small profile picture of Dr. Jay Khorsandi, DDS, with text indicating the clinical content was reviewed by him, last modified in May 2022, and is fact-checked. A 'Table of Contents' sidebar lists seven items: 1. Children with Autism Face Increased Oral Health Risks, 2. Oral Health Tips, 3. Recommended Oral Hygiene Products, 4. Visiting the Dentist, 5. Dentists with Special Training, 6. Resources for Parents and Kids, and 7. References. The main content area begins with a paragraph stating that children with autism are more likely to have oral health problems like tooth decay and gum disease, and that many autistic kids have sensory sensitivities that make dental visits challenging. It then mentions that parents and caregivers can do several things to make oral hygiene and dental visits easier, such as implementing behavioral techniques and using autism-friendly dental products.

byte Community Initiatives

A Guide to Dental Care for Children with Autism

Resources > Community Initiatives > A Guide to Dental Care for Children with Autism

CLINICAL CONTENT REVIEWED BY
Dr. Jay Khorsandi, DDS
Last Modified: May 20, 2022 ✓ FACT CHECKED

Table of Contents

1. Children with Autism Face Increased Oral Health Risks
2. Oral Health Tips
3. Recommended Oral Hygiene Products
4. Visiting the Dentist
5. Dentists with Special Training
6. Resources for Parents and Kids
7. References

Children with autism are likely to suffer many more oral health problems, including tooth decay, gum disease and dental injury, than children without autism. Many autistic kids have sensory sensitivities that make it difficult to maintain an effective oral hygiene routine. These issues may also make visits to the dentist challenging.

Parents and caregivers can do several things to make oral hygiene and dental visits easier for their autistic kids. Implementing behavioral techniques, using autism-friendly dental products, and seeking out dental professionals with specialized knowledge can all help your child with autism maintain good oral health.

Children with Autism Face Increased Oral Health Risks

Example

Connect. Empower. Grow.

More than just software, Dentrix connects your practice technology into one management system, one workflow – so teams work smarter.

[REQUEST A DEMO](#)



[WATCH OVERVIEW VIDEO](#)

So if I'm Dentrix, there would be huge opportunities to create a dental health guide for parents of children with special needs.

- Dental Resource Pages
- Parental Resource Pages
- Resource pages for certain conditions

We created a guide that connects us with 3 spheres of relevancy!

Creating Link Generating Guide Summarized:

Create Top of The Funnel, Audience Focused Content

Begin looking at the kinds of pages people generally link from and see what trends you pick up

Look for examples of successful linkable content

Use that inspiration to create your own piece that is similar yet provides its own unique value.

How To Promote Your Content

What Makes a Good Target Site?

How To Find Suitable Target Sites

How To Find Contact Information

Outreach Best Practices

What Makes a Good Target Site?

Take a balanced approach

Look to create a backlink profile that provides a solid mix of the following quality criteria:

Relevance

Engagement

Authority

DON'T LET LOWER DA's PREVENT YOU FROM GETTING GREAT LINKS.

Dentrix Example - Don't set Minimum DA!

Why wouldn't links from dental practices be great links for a dental software company?

<https://scottstewartdmd.com/dental-links> - DA 14

<https://www.associatesfororalsurgery.com/referring-doctors/links-of-interest/> - DA 19

<https://www.yoursmiledocs.com/useful-dental-links> - DA 21

<https://mountvistadental.com/patient-information/helpful-dental-links/> - DA 17

These are all **HIGHLY** relevant from topically authoritative sources.
Think about links as endorsements! These are GREAT Endorsements.

Do They Actually Get Links?

- <https://loveonetoday.com/nutrition/nutrition-for-cancer-patients-a-comprehensive-resource-guide/>
 - <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Retiree-Services-Program/>
 - <https://www.hepb.org/research-and-programs/liver/>
 - <https://www.vbcf.org/nutrition-support-essentials/>



Unlinked Mentions

- I LOVE UNLINKED MENTIONS. So underrated.
- This only works if you're a bigger brand or have a decent PR presence.
- A great opportunity to get organic links to your main product pages. Especially if you have a product your brand gets mentioned in conjunction with
- Use Google News to search your brand, C-Level, Owners, etc.
- Mention.com, Brandwatch, Mentionlytics.

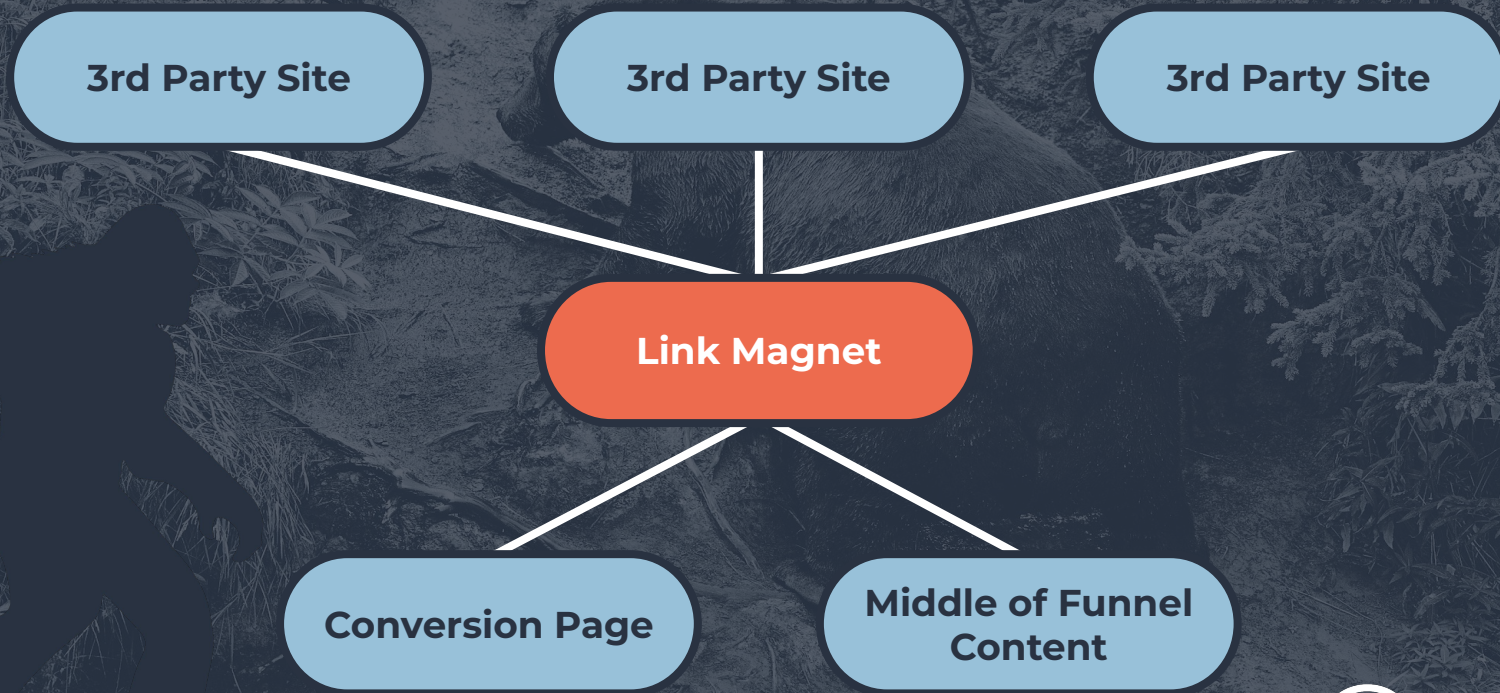
Do They Work? Yes!!

- Cornell.edu
- UCSC.edu
- Clickup.com
- StaxPayments.com
- Berkeley.edu

Over 150% Growth in 6 Months!!



Maximizing Results: Internal Links

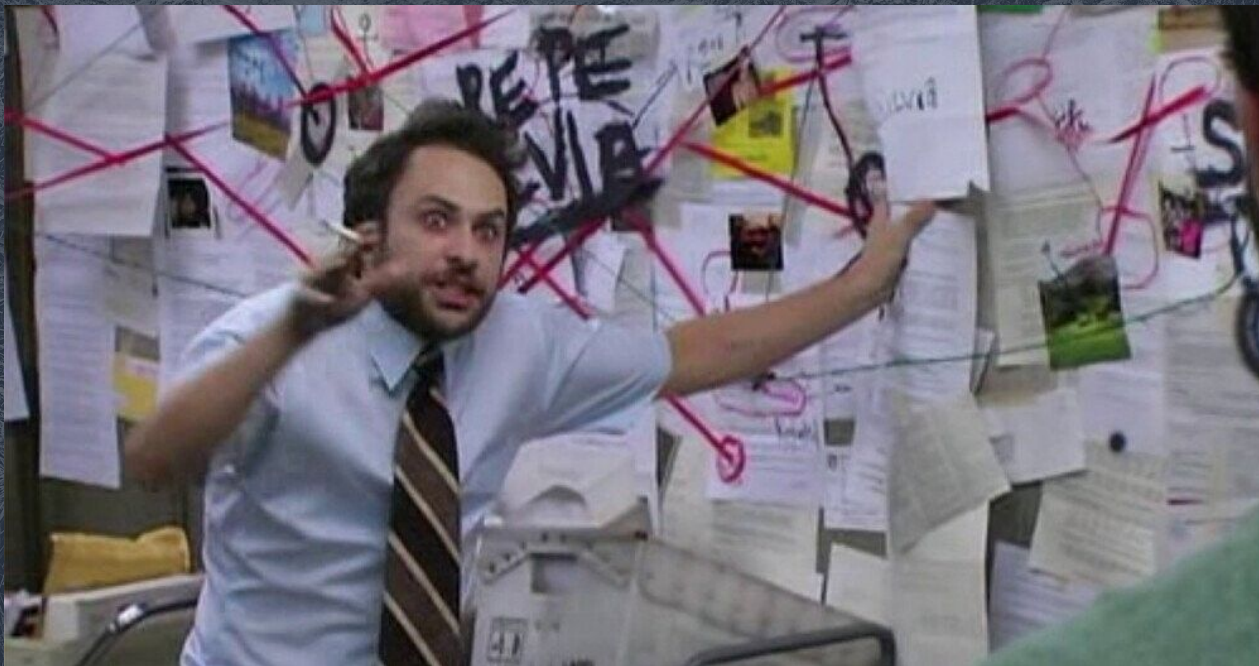


Maximizing Results: Internal Links

This is Repeatable. It's not just a campaign, IT'S A SYSTEM.



Maximizing Results!



Or... We Can Do It For You.

We'll help you build your own content & link system:

We're offering a **free ranking roadmap report:**

- Competitor Analysis
- Keyword Opportunities
- Linkable Content Idea

If you choose to move forward we'll give you 20% off your first month of services!



POLL!

**Are you interested in getting
20% off your first month of Link
Building with Resolve?**



THANK YOU!

Michael Johnson

CEO at Resolve

GrowResolve.com

Michael@growresolve.com



@Michael_Resolve



@michaeljohnsonresolve



Extended Q&A in Virtual Booth!

Q&A

with



Michael
Johnson



MODERATED BY

Heather Campbell

Director of Marketing, Search Engine Journal

NEXT **SEJ** WEBINAR

Mastering Multi-Touchpoint Content Strategy:

Navigate Fragmented User Journeys

Wednesday, May 29, 2PM Eastern



Wayne Cichanski

Vice President of Search &
Site Experience, iQuanti

SUPPORTED BY

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